

September begins with a sizzle at annual RibFest

As the summer heat gradually gives way to the cooler winds of autumn, some of the hottest events in Aurora are still yet to come.

A month of fun kicks off next weekend with Aurora Ribfest, an annual tradition at Machell Park from September 6 ? September 8.

Bringing together barbeque masters from Toronto to Albuquerque, thousands are expected to come out for three days of food, fun, and music.

Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator with the Town of Aurora, looks each year to put on a different spin so there is something new for everyone.

?You strive to be different and unique from other municipalities,? she says. ?If you are striving for that, you're able to find that different twist.?

Attractions this year include musicians for the young and the young at heart from A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen on Friday, September 6, to The Carpet Frogs and Honeymoon Suite on Saturday, and The Mud Men as the capper on Sunday.

There will also be a midway for kids and families, a beer garden operated by the Rotary Club for some more mature refreshment and, in addition to the ribs from Bone Daddy's from Fort Erie, Camp 31 from Alabama, Uncle Sam's from Albuquerque, NM, Bibb's BBQ from Florida and Rib Royale from Las Vegas, there will also be a corn and yam roast, blooming onions, BeaverTails, and ice cream.

For the first time this year, however, age of majority will be enforced at Machell Park after 8 p.m. on September 6 and September 7.

?We want to encourage age of majority after 8 p.m. because of limited land space and because of the draw of bands we have brought in,? explains Ms. Ware. ?They are really geared towards the 30s and older crowd, so we want to ensure we have space for those who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to see groups like Honeymoon Suite.

?Sometimes if the younger populations come in, they are not there for that and other people can't get in because space is taken up. If we had bigger land space, it would be different. We are intimately packed into Machell Park.?

The younger crowd, however, can look forward to the ACE Firebirds Cheerleading Squad, which Ms. Ware says is going six girls high, as well as the Midway, and Sunday's entertainment with the Mud Men.

People can also get a kick at the expense of the local media as representatives from The Auroran, SNAP Aurora, and The Banner take on a ?pressure challenge? to find the ?tastiest media team.?. It may have a fancy name, but it is essentially a rib eating contest.

?This is the one time the community gets to see how approachable and fun they are,? says Ms. Ware of the local media. ?I am happy to be able to present that opportunity to see them all together because they want the best for Aurora in their own niche market and their own approaches. You see the papers, but you don't see the personalities.?

Meanwhile, on the other side of Town at Ada Johnson Park, Ms. Ware continues bringing together the ideas of the Aurora 150 Committee for the Community Cultural Celebration on September 21, the final event in the Town's series of events intended to celebrate the Town's Sesquicentennial.

The intent of the event is not just to engage communities on the eastern side of Aurora, but also to celebrate the many international cultures represented in the changing faces of Aurora. In addition to Aboriginal performances from Mystic Drums, there will be cultural representations and performances from around the world, from China to Crete, as well as a smorgasbord of international cuisine.

?You always want residents to take away the sense of community, the sense of how diverse the community is and how broad and amazing the community is,? says Ms. Ware. ?As our Town's tagline says, you're always in good company and we want people to feel that, experience that, and walk away knowing it.?